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DEPT FOR EAP/CM AND DRL/PHD - O'SULLIVAN
NSC FOR DENNIS WILDER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 9/27/2017

TAGS: PHUM PGOV CH

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON ZHEJIANG DISSIDENT LU GENGSONG

REF: BEIJING 5820

CLASSIFIED BY: Veomayoury Baccam, Acting Political/Economic
Section Chief, U.S. Consulate , Shanghai .

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶11. (C) On September 26, Poloff received an update on detained Zhejiang dissident Lu Gengsong's case from Lu's wife, Wang Xue'e, and Hangzhou activist and freelance journalist Wink Ho. Ho is one of the organizers of a letter signed by more than 1,000 Chinese intellectuals and activists calling for Lu's release. (See reftel.) Lu was detained by Hangzhou authorities on August 24 on charges of "illegally obtaining State secrets" and "inciting subversion." According to Wang and Ho, the Hangzhou authorities should decide by this weekend whether it will formally charge Lu or release him. Wang said that authorities told her that it is unlikely that Lu will be released. If Lu is not released this weekend, the family plans to increase pressure on the government through a letter writing campaign. In addition, Wang and Ho would also like for the USG to raise the case with the Chinese Government if Lu is not released.

¶12. (C) Lu is one of the most popular and well-respected activists in Zhejiang. He has been writing about housing compensation problems and promoting human rights reforms for many years. Wang and Ho suspect that Lu was arrested because his recent articles discussed specific housing compensation cases in Hangzhou, which were critical of the local authority. They hope that by raising the case's profile, Beijing will intercede and force the local government to release Lu.

¶13. (C) Ho said it is unclear whether the letter has had any impact. Before the letter was released, some in community urged the family not to "make a big deal" out of the case and to keep a low profile. The family and the activists behind the letter waited for nearly a month to see if the authorities would release Lu. When nothing happened, they decided to go forth and release the letter. According to Ho, so far, the government has not taken any action on the people who signed the letter. He believes that government retribution is unlikely. The letter received a great deal of attention in the international media and any government action against the signers of the letter would lead to negative attention, something that the Chinese Government was trying to avoid in the run-up to the Olympics. Also, more than 1,000 people signed the letter and it is impossible for the government to take action against so many

people.

¶4. (C) Wang said although she has only visited her husband once shortly after he was detained, she believes that he is healthy and has not been mistreated. While her husband suffers from high blood pressure, authorities allowed her to give him his medication during their last meeting. In addition, she was told by prison authorities that they will not beat or mistreat her husband. She believes the authorities and said Hangzhou prison guards rarely beat prisoners.

JARRETT